

City of Coconut Creek InterOffice Memorandum

To: Planning and Zoning Board
Date: March 8, 2017
From: W. Scott Stoudenmire, AICP
Deputy Director of Sustainable Development
Subject: **McDonalds Sign Deviation
Agenda Item No. 6**

Applicant/Agent: Craig McDonald, Corporate Property Services
Owner: Interstate Coconut LLC
Requested Action/Description: Sign Deviation
Location: 4450 North State Road 7
Legal Description: A portion of Parcel "A" of McJAMES PLAT NO. 1 according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 147 of Page 18 of the Public Records of Broward County, Florida.
Size: .09 +/- acres
Existing Zoning: PCD (Planned Commerce District)
Existing Use: Fast Food Restaurant
Future Land Use Plan Designation: COMM (Commercial)
Platted: McJames Plat No. 1
Plat Restriction: Restricted to 200,000 square feet of commercial use

Requested Action/Description:

The applicant, Craig McDonald, as agent on behalf of the owner, Interstate Coconut LLC, is requesting a sign deviation for the McDonalds restaurant located at 4450 North State Road 7. The requested deviation to Section 13-468.7 of the City's Land Development Code is to allow for a second restaurant menu sign when only one is permitted.

Analysis/Findings:

Due to the age of the current facility and the change in market conditions, the building is currently undergoing renovations to modify and upgrade the exterior building elevations, as well as modernize the interior of the restaurant. The previously approved site plan reflects a McDonald's fast food restaurant with a single drive-thru lane and a single ordering point, with one menu board.

The new drive-thru configuration, with a side by side drive-thru lane configuration, will decrease the wait time for the drive-thru customers. The two ordering points, located within a

separate and distinctive side by side drive-thru lane, will allow vehicles to move through the drive thru process with greater efficiency, while providing better coordination with the kitchen. In conjunction with the side by side drive-thru configuration, a second menu board sign will be necessary.

The standards for the purpose of all signs are listed in Section 13-456(d) of the Land Development Code. The standards for granting a sign deviation are listed in Section 13-473(c) Immediately following each criteria are the applicant's verbatim responses from each section as provided in their formal application:

Compliance with the Regulations for the Use and Control of Signs, Section 13-456(d)

1. The proposed sign will enhance the visual environment of the City both day and night.

Section 13-468.7 states that only one (1) restaurant menu sign oriented to the drive thru window stacking lane shall be permitted. A sign deviation is being requested for the proposed second menu board sign that will enhance the visual environment of the City by being consistent in size with neighboring signage, but creative in design to appeal to customers and increase efficiency by moving motorists through the drive-thru lanes faster. The proposed second menu board and side by side ordering configuration translates into a better overall customer service experience.

2. The proposed sign will integrate with its surroundings.

The proposed second menu board sign easily integrates with the building architecture and promotes the McDonald's "Forever Young" theme. McDonald's is an existing use and the second menu board will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding commercial shopping center.

3. The proposed sign is creative in the design, lighting and construction, including the use of the typefaces, colors, and materials.

The proposed second menu board has been designed and will be constructed in a creative manner that reflects the McDonald's "Forever Young" image through the use of a dimensional design, colors, lighting, materials and consistency with existing signage.

4. The proposed sign is expressive of the identity of individual proprietors or of the community as a whole.

The design of the proposed second menu board is expressive of the new McDonald's "Forever Young" brand and their commitment to their customers by providing a more effective drive thru experience with regards to efficient and quality service.

5. The proposed sign is legible under the circumstances in which it will be seen.

The proposed second menu board will be consistent with the existing sign that is vibrant making it attractive as well and clearly identifying the menu options, therefore enhancing the customer's experience.

6. The proposed sign is conducive to promoting traffic safety by preventing visual distraction and providing clear direction.

The proposed second menu board has been designed to not visually impact the safety of other drivers as they smoothly transition from the point of order to the pay window without any potential for competition between motorists to cause an accident. In general, zoning jurisdictions attempt to restrict menu board signage in an effort to promote roadside aesthetics and traffic safety. While these are legitimate public concerns, menu board signage is not intended or designed to be visible, attract customers or otherwise divert traffic from the public streets. The proposed menu board signs are located behind the building and will not be visible from the right-of-way. Menu board signage is solely designed and positioned to be viewed by McDonald's drive-thru customers. In addition, undue restrictions on menu board signage will actually create stacking and safety issues by limiting effective communication to McDonald's drive-thru customers and interfering with the efficient processing of drive-thru orders!

7. The proposed sign will effectively and efficiently communicate in simple, straightforward and attractive manner.

The proposed sign is visually pleasing through the use of colors and graphics that effectively and efficiently communicate the menu options.

Compliance with the Sign Deviation Standards, Section 13-473(c)

1. The requested deviation is not contrary to the public interest, and is in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the signage regulations.

The proposed second menu board is not contrary to public interest but will be a benefit to the public utilizing the McDonald's drive-thru. The new side by side menu board configuration will offer increased efficiency by moving motorists through the drive-through lanes faster, whereby decreasing the dwell time of motorists and queues in the drive-thru lane. The proposed sign deviation to allow a second menu board is certainly in harmony with the general intent and purpose of this commercial subdivision. The site will continue to be utilized as a fast food restaurant with a drive thru and adding a second menu board will not take away from or diminish the commercial character of the shopping center in any way.

2. Approval of the requested deviation will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding development or applicable uniform sign plan.

Approval of the sign deviation will definitely not adversely affect the character of the surrounding commercial shopping center development or the applicable uniform sign plan. McDonald's is an existing use and the proposed second menu board will only enhance the operational efficiency of the drive-thru service. Approval of the second menu board and side by side ordering configuration will enable McDonald's to provide its consumers with decreased service time, which translates into a better overall customer service experience.

3. The literal interpretation and application of the sign regulations will deprive Petitioner of sign visibility or effectiveness shared by other property owners.

The fast food industry is moving toward providing two ordering stations at the drive-thru, which eventually merge back into one lane to pay for and pick up food. The current code does not take this evolving industry drive-thru design into consideration and therefore the literal interpretation of the code will deprive McDonald's from offering their customers the highest level of customer service, which is paramount to maintaining the current customer base.

4. Approval of the requested deviation will not degrade the area involved or be detrimental to public welfare.

Approval of the sign deviation to allow the second menu board will not degrade the area involved, as it will be located within an existing drive-thru lane. Furthermore, it will not be detrimental to public welfare as the new drive-thru configuration will enhance service and increase the efficiency of the restaurant and decrease the wait time for drive-thru customers. The side by side ordering points located within the single drive-thru lane will allow vehicles to move through the drive-thru process with greater efficiency, while providing better coordination with the kitchen. The 3 revised site access, along the eastern property lines, will increase the operational efficiency of the drive-thru and enhance the customer service experience.

5a. The conditions that exist that are not the result of Petitioner's actions, such that a literal enforcement of the regulations involved would result in unnecessary or undue hardship.

The fast food industry is moving toward providing two ordering stations at the drive-thru that eventually merge back into one lane to pay for and pick up food. The current code does not take this evolving industry drive-thru design into consideration and therefore the literal interpretation of the code will deprive McDonald's from offering their customers the highest level of customer service, which is paramount to maintaining the current customer base. Thereby, due to the code's inability to stay on pace with the evolving fast food restaurant industry, McDonald's has an undue hardship of having to work within the restraints of only one menu board, which is not the result of McDonald's actions. The new side by side drive-thru lane configuration will enhance service and increase the efficiency of the restaurant and decrease the wait time of the drive-thru customers. Literal enforcement of the Land Development Sign Code section to restrict McDonald's to only one menu board will result in an unnecessary and undue hardship.

5b. There is something unique about the land, building, or site configuration that would cause the signage permitted by this sign code of the ineffective in identifying a use or a structure that would otherwise be entitled to a sign:

The new side by side menu board configuration will offer increased efficiency by moving motorists through the drive-through lanes faster, whereby decreasing the dwell time of motorists and queues in the drive-thru lane. The proposed sign deviation to allow a second menu board is certainly in harmony with the general intent and purpose of this commercial subdivision. The site will continue to be utilized as a fast food restaurant with a drive thru and adding a second menu board will not take away from or diminish the commercial character of the shopping center in any way

Staff Recommendation:

City staff has reviewed the application and finds the proposed deviation request consistent with Section 13-473(c) of the City of Coconut Creek Land Development Code, subject to the following conditions:

1. Outstanding DRC comments remain effective throughout the development review process and must be addressed prior to issuance of a building permit.

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Attachments:

- Aerial Photo
- DRC Report
- Exhibit